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XXI.

206, 9 – 207, 32 :

Only these verses are a paraphrase of the epigram attributed to POSEIDIPPOS. There are also more or less free translations by AUSONIUS, ed. Schenkl, 1883, p. 147, ERASMUS, *Adagia*, s. v. Optimum non nasci, RONSARD, vol. ii (1889), p. 57, HUGO GROTIUS, *Epigrammatum Anthologia Palatina*, ed. Dübner, vol. ii (1888), p. 71.

The one by RONSARD may be printed here :

Quel train de vie est-il bon que ie suiue,
A fin, Muret, qu'heureusement ie viue ?
Aux Cours des Rois regne l'ambition,
Les Senateurs sont pleins de passion :
Les maisons sont de mille soucis pleines,
Le labourage est tout rempli de peines,
Le matelot familier du labeur
Dessus les eaux pallit tousiours de peur.
Celuy qui erre en vn pais estrange,
S'il a du bien, il craint qu'on ne le mange :
L'indigence ert vne extreme douleur.
Le mariage est comblé de malheur,
Et si lon vit sans estre en mariage,
Seul et desert il faut vser son âge :
Auoir enfans, n'auoir enfans aussi
Donne tousiours domestique souci.
La ieunesse est peu sage et mal-habile,
La vieillesse est languissante et debile,
Ayant tousiours la mort deuant les yeux.
Donque, Muret, ie croy qu'il vaudroit mieux
L'vn de ces deux, ou bien iamais de n'estre,
Ou de mourir si tost qu'on vient de naistre.

K. PIETSCH.

The Newberry Library, Chicago.

ENGLISH POETRY.

A History of English Poetry: by W. J. Courthope, M. A. Vol. I. The Middle Ages: Influence of the Roman Empire—The Encyclopædic Education of the Church—The Feudal System. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1895. 8vo, pp. xxix, 474.

PROFESSOR WOODROW WILSON, in an article "On the Writing of History" (*Century*, Sept., 1895), after a concise review of the work of Macaulay, Carlyle, Gibbon, and Green, makes the suggestive statement that it is impossible for him to write a perfect history

who, after infinite labor in the consultation of original authorities, in the collection of material, in the amassing of notes, references, verifications, illustrations, and all the numberless details of careful investigations, then,

"thoroughly stuffed and sophisticated, turns back, and begins his narrative. It does not do to lose the point of view of the first listener to the tale or to rearrange the matter too much out of the order of nature."

These remarks apply with equal force to the historian of literature, and they serve, to a certain extent, as a comment on the volume before us. Hitherto, histories of English Literature that pretended to cover more than a limited period of literary development, lacked unity and consecutiveness. The work of Morley, in his *Short Sketch* and his *English Writers*, partakes too much of the nature of a short commentary on the life and work of the individual authors, without any distinct recognition of their place in the grand fabric of English Literature. The same must necessarily be the fault of the history of English Literature under the joint authorship of Brooke, Saintsbury, and Gosse, however excellently each particular period may be written. Taine's brilliant history can hardly lay claim to accurate scholarship or unprejudiced criticism, and Warton's *History of English Poetry* is antiquated.

The need of a scholarly treatment of the history of English Literature is thus apparent. This need Professor Courthope has endeavored to supply. Avoiding the danger of treating literature on the plan of the school-manual, he adopts a quite different and much more sensible plan. He looks for the "unity of the subject in the life of the nation as a whole;" his aim is to "treat poetry as an expression of the imagination, not simply of the individual poet, but of the English people." There is no doubt as to the excellence of this scheme, and its immense superiority over that of any other modern history is admirably shown in Professor Courthope's work. But there is the danger that Professor Wilson calls attention to, and we shall find that our author has not avoided it.

After a brief introduction, defining the scope and nature of the subject, Professor Court-

hope considers the character and sources of Mediæval poetry, in which are traced the relation of mediæval to classical poetry, and the development of the primitive poetry under the influence of the Church, the new mythology, the Feudal institutions, scholasticism, and Oriental culture. A short chapter is then devoted to the whole period of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in which it is impossible to do full justice to the significance of our earliest literature. The fourth chapter deals with Anglo-Norman poetry, in which is considered the influence of this poetry on the English, and which contains nearly all that treats of the vast extent of Middle English poetry. The fifth chapter, dealing with the early Renaissance, characterizes the early Italian and the early French Literature, and treats of the political awakening of the English in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as shown in their songs. Langland is the subject of the sixth chapter, and Chaucer of the seventh. Chaucer is considered as a translator, as an imitator, and as an inventor, thus covering his whole literary life. The "Epical School" follows, in which Gower, Lydgate, and Occleve are treated. The remaining chapters deal with the "Progress of Allegory," the "Rise of the Drama in England," the "Decay of English Minstrelsy," and a brief "Retrospect."

A good illustration of Professor Wilson's remarks is furnished in the Chapter on Anglo-Saxon Literature. After a most inadequate statement of the metrical principles of A.-S. verse,—a mere quotation from Vigfusson and Powell's *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*,—he divides all the poetry into three classes: 1. Purely Teutonic; 2. Scriptural story in Teutonic spirit; 3. Christian. Under the first head are included *Widsið*, *Deor*, and *Beowulf*. Nothing is said about the *Waldere* fragments, nor the fragment of the fight at Finnesburg, both of which are too important to be neglected in any sketch of A.-S. poetry. Professor Courthope's theory of the *Beowulf* is that the work is a unity, and that it "proceeded from the mind of a single poet, though it was doubtless built by him out of materials previously existing." The poet was a Christian, but not necessarily an ecclesiastic. He

was a roving scop, like him of the *Widsið*.

Under the second head are considered the so-called Cædmon poems, and under the third the poems of Cynewulf and his school. Instead of assigning the *Andreas* to Cynewulf, as Professor Courthope does, and classing it under his third head, he should have put it under his second. It is a Christian story, and has much of the fierce Teutonic spirit of the *Beowulf*. *Guthlac* A (Prof. Courthope does not mention the two parts of *Guthlac*) and the *Fata Apostolorum* are still a subject of dispute as to authorship, and have no right to be given unreservedly to Cynewulf.

As a curious illustration of Professor Courthope's Anglo-Saxon the specimen on pp. 106-7 will serve, where there are six mistakes in spelling, fifteen words with the quantity of the syllable wrongly marked, and one instance where a false punctuation alters the translation. The translation is Arnolds, and is faulty.

In his treatment of Anglo-Norman poetry, Professor Courthope gives far too little attention to the poetry of the Romances, as it bloomed in England in the fourteenth century. The four great Cycles of Romances are treated with the scantiest justice. Hardly anything is said of the poems of *Gawayne*, *Reccunder*, *William of Palerne*, etc. These poems constitute a very important factor in the poetry of the period, both in their subject-matter, and in their form as being vigorous survivals of the A.-S. metre. Nothing is said in the volume before us of the history of this survival, although it goes back in a direct line to its A.-S. original. To speak of Langland "*resuscitating*" a form of metrical expression which time and the nature of things had rendered obsolete" (p. 246) is contrary to the known history of the metre.

When Professor Courthope says (p. 263),

"Chaucer had therefore to create for his imaginary history [*Troilus and Cressida*] an equally imaginary historian, and this he did by citing the 'Latin' of the supposed Trojan historian Lollius,"

he contradicts himself, for two pages before he states that Chaucer believed Lollius to be the author of the Trojan war, and he quotes the line from Horace, already noticed in

Athenæum, Oct. 3, 1868, as conjectured proof.

With the exception of a table giving the mere sources of the *Canterbury Tales*, nothing is said regarding Chaucer's relation to his originals. It is not easy to form a just estimate of the poet's artistic skill in story-telling without considering the crude narratives which go to form the subject-matter of his tales. Chaucer's material goes through such a transformation in his hands as distinguishes him from the mere literary artisan, Gower, and to neglect such an important feature of criticism as the relation to originals is to leave the reader without one of the surest evidences of the poet's genius.

Enough has been said from these few sections of the *History* to indicate its shortcomings. The merits of the book are its unfailing interest, its attractive style, and the admirable scheme on which it is planned. The necessity of regarding literary history as we have come to regard national history cannot be too strongly emphasized. Professor Courthope's work is an attempt to look at our literature from this point of view, and, in so far as he has not allowed himself to be careless of details, he has given us a history of English poetry which will be helpful and suggestive in the study of our literature. In the succeeding volumes we shall doubtless have a result that will do more justice to the subjects considered, and that will reveal our author on ground with which he has already shown himself thoroughly familiar.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

ENGLISH BALLADS.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—There are not a few passages in English ballads which have never been satisfactorily explained. Light upon those which here follow would be gratefully received, including conjectural emendations when these seem to be required.

ARCHERY.—*frese* your bowes of ewe.—Stanza 215 of A Gest of Robyn Hode. (Later copies, bend we.)

a *bearing* arrow.—Adam Bell, st. 150, and elsewhere.

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne shoot at a wand (pricke-wand). What is meant then by Guy's shooting "within the garland," in st. 31? We have a rose-garland again in the Gest of R. H., 7th Fit, where there is shooting at yerds or wands, stanzas 397, 398. Here we may conceive that a garland was hung upon the yerd; but in the other case the two men meet in a wood, and a rose-garland could not easily be extemporised (though a rod might be bent into a circlet and attached to the wand).

With that ther cam an arrowe hastily, forthe off a myghttē *wane*.—Hunting of the Cheviot, Ashmole MS., st. 36. (The gloss, "a single arrow out of a vast quantity" (*wone*) seems to me prosaic and not in the style of the ballad. Is there any case of *wane*, *wain*, used as the vehicle of a shaft?)

Loxly puld forth a broad arowe, he shott it *under hand*.—Robin Hood and Q. Katherine, Percy MS., st. 29.

R. H. Garland of 1663, st. 26. Then did the king's archer his arrows command, but Robin shot *under his hand*, and hit the mark. (R. Hood and Q. K. again.)

MARINE.—(Sir Andrew Barton). He clasped me to his *archborde*.—Percy MS., st. 23.

Either in *archbord* (MS. charkebord) or in *hall*, st. 29. (Perhaps hatch-bord, as in st. 36, st. 70.) What is *hatch-bord*?

Sir A. Barton, York copy, Surtees Society, vol. lxxxv, p. 64, st. 30: Ethere *bye lerbord* or *by lowe*, that Scotte would overcome yowe.

Roxburgh copy, st. 34. Thus bravely did Lord Howard pass, and did *on anchor rise so high* (while sailing).

York copy, st. 59. Horsley with a broode-arrow-head tooke hime in at the buttuke of *the utuer beame*.

And he schet not to hye;
þrow the *sanchoþis* of his bryk;
It towchyd neyþer thye.

Robyn and Gandeleyne.

Here be the best *coresed* hors that ever yet sawe I.—Gest of R. H., st. 100. (Later copies: corese, corse.) Bodied?

How much is in yonder other *corser*?—Gest, st. 256. Later copies: What is on the